

North Carolina Cost Share Programs Review Summary
FY2021

County	<u>Pender</u>	Date of Previous Review/Report	<u>2015</u>
District Staff Name(s)	<u>Jason Turner, Priscilla Pierce</u>	Date	<u>11/17/2020</u>
NRCS Staff Name(s)	<u>Gavin Thompson</u>		
Division Representative(s)	<u>Ken Parks, Kristina Fischer, Josh Vetter</u>		
Additional Participants	<u></u>		

Questions	Division Findings				Division Comments	District Plan of Action Required		SWCD Plan of Action	Proposed Timeline for Implementation	Division Response to Plan of Action (date)
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Section 1: Application Procedures and Tracking Progress (BMP Implementation and Payments) Questions in this section focus on how the district advertises the program, how applications are developed, how contracts are developed, how funds are tracked and how the board approves each.										
How/when are the district board meetings scheduled?				X	The board meetings are scheduled on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Board meetings have been in person and the Fall meeting was remote.		X			
How do you notify the public of the board meeting schedule? Does it adhere to the Open Meetings Law?				X	The meeting notices are posted on the bulletin board at the office and the county library.		X			

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Please describe the district's process for providing assistance to applicants by assessing resource concerns to determine if a BMP is "needed and feasible" and then developing the conservation plan.		X			The district determines the client's objectives with which program, either state cost share or federal programs with their resource concerns. Then arrange a site visit to the client's property or farm. Sometimes the client brings in pictures of the resource concerns. Recommend using conservation planning before guiding the client to a certain cost share program.		X	We adopted the nine-step process that is attached and will be utilizing this in the process of the determination of ag cost share applications.	Immediately	Plan of action accepted on 3/25/21.
Does the district provide technical assistance without cost share funds?				X	The determination is made where financial assistance is not applicable, or the client is not eligible.		X			
What type of technical assistance is provided without cost share funds?				X	Technical assistance has been offered to clients with drainage issues or pond questions and provided agronomy information. Aerial photography assistance is offered. The district assists with clients' using the grain drill also. The district technician is on the county's technical review committee for erosion for construction.		X			
How does the district prioritize which applicants get funded? Do you prioritize certain watersheds, BMPs, type of operation, first come - first served, etc?	X				The district prioritizes applications based on the district's ranking sheets for each cost share program. Prioritization parameters on water courses based on river basin plans, erosion rate, leaching potential, acres affected, funding necessity, timetable		X			

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					and points for never using the cost share program for ACSP. Other programs have similar type parameters. All ranking sheets for all programs use an effective point system. These ranking sheets are reviewed each ear. Commendation given.					
Once each application is considered, what does the district do with the score? Do you fund based on the score, use another system to prioritize, create eligibility categories, or other?				X	The district goes by the highest-ranking score first on the ranking sheets. No categories, just by the score itself.		X			
Describe the process the district follows when there is a tie on applicants' scores.				X	The board breaks a tie by the date of the application. The district date stamps the application.		X			
Does the district purposefully withhold a percentage of funds until a later date in the program year to be able to fund higher quality projects (more water quality or water quantity benefits) or does the district fund applications until it runs out of funding each batching period? Does the district automatically fund cooperators who applied but did not get funded in the previous program year due to lack of funds or does it re-rank them with new applications?				X	All applications are taken year-round, however the batching periods from July 1 to Sept. 30 each year. The funds are usually obligated during this batching period. The district works with the NRCS program also to help fund clients. The district does not automatically fund cooperators and re-ranks the applications each year. The district does have a local contract cap of \$10,000 annually per applicant. Some BMPs have their own caps also. These are reviewed each year for any possible changes.		X			

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Are applications, contracts and requests for payments reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?	X				The district staff prepares a breakdown of all applications, contracts and RFPS on a document to present and discuss with the board. Yes, these items approved separately other than RFPS which are done by delegated authority signature and presented as an information item. Commendation given.		X			
Are application, contracts and requests for payments motions/decisions recorded in the board minutes?				X	Yes, see June 2020 minutes.		X			
Has your district delegated signature authority for requests for payments to be approved outside of board meetings? How are they recorded in your board meeting minutes?				X	Yes, Don Rawls, the chairman signs the RFPS as delegated authority and Trent Talbert, vice-chairman. The RFP is presented as an information item.		X			
Applicants are limited when applying for incentive BMPs. How does your district track applicants so they do not go over the practice caps and to be sure they haven't already "adopted" the practice?	X				The district developed an Excel spreadsheet with the help of the division coordinator for all cost share incentive BMPs like no-till, crop residue, nutrient mgmt., cover crop, etc. A running tally is tracked for these applicants to ensure the incentive caps are not exceeded with dates, funds, and other details. This started in 2009. Commendation given.		X			

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If multiple partners farm together, how does the district track individual applicants as one operation or entity?				X	This is tracked on the spreadsheet where there are multiple partners and each time the apply.		X			
At what point in the application process does the district develop the contract? (After Ranking, After Application Approved?) Describe this process.				X	The district develops the contract after the board approves the application and then contract forms are put together as a conservation plan with designs, engineering assistance depending on the practice, CR review, planning costs, etc. This information is entered in CS2 and then get signatures for the contract forms. The chairman is usually the last person that signs the 11 form.		X			
Describe how the district reviews the contract with the applicant. Do you explain that work cannot begin until the contract is approved by the division?				X	The district technician gives the applicant the documentation and forms with a 7-step process plan that the district has created to implement the BMP. This plan lets the applicant know to not start work until division approval is given. Once divisional approval on the contract is given, a contract file folder is given to the applicant with all their conservation plan and contract information in it.		X			
What procedures do you follow for notifying the applicant that work can begin?				X	The district notifies the applicant to start work after the division contract approval email. A letter is given to the		X			


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					applicant when the contract is approved and they can start work and dates provided. Sometimes a pre-construction meeting is done before any work is started.					
Describe the district/board's procedure for approving supervisor contracts.				X	The district ranks the application like normal and the supervisors' forms are completed in CS2 and Formsite. The contracts are ranked like everyone else.		X			
Is it documented in the Board minutes that the supervisor abstained from discussing his/her own contract and from voting?				X	See March 2019 minutes. Yes, it was recorded that the chairman Don Rawls abstained from voting.		X			
Is each contract reviewed in detail with the board before approval? Do you project CS2?				X	The district has a form with all the contract information in detail that is shared with the board. They do not project CS2 due to technology capabilities. They do have the contract file folders to the meeting if needed. All information is provided to the board.		X			
What information do you provide the applicant?				X	The district provides the conservation plan packet/file folder with all documents/forms for implementing the BMPs and the district approval letter.		X			
What technical assistance do you provide during the BMP installation process to ensure the BMP is installed correctly and by the contract deadline?				X	The district give approval dates by the division and the 1/3 rd date is in the letter also. The technician makes site visits, phone calls or emails to check on the progress of the BMP		X			


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					installation. If no work started, a follow-up letter is sent to the applicant.					
How do you track the Commission’s interim performance milestone? One-third of the work must be completed within 12 months of division approval. Are you using CS2?				X	The 1/3 rd date is tracked by the division approval email date and is tracked on the BMP tracking spreadsheet with a column for the 1/3 rd date. The district technician does not currently use the CS2 date but may in the future.		X			
If 1/3 of the work has not been completed within 12 months and the cooperator requests additional time, is the district recording 6-month extensions in the board minutes?				X	The district will work with the cooperator with a 6-month extension if requested. This is rare for the district but would get the applicant to send a letter with the request for why an extension is needed. Then the board would take it up for approval or denial. There has not been a situation to record in the minutes.		X			
What documentation do you include in the contract file that certifies that the BMP was inspected and is installed to the standards?				X	The 6 notes are in the contract folder and any NRCS construction checks and checkout forms. The notes are of the installation are in the field books also. Photos of the finished BMP are included also.		X			
Are BMPs measured then certified before the request for payment is approved? How is this documented?				X	Yes, on-site field inspections and measurements are done to ensure that what was implemented matches what is on the RFP. Invoices are inspected carefully also to compare with the BMP		X			


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					installation.					
Section 2: Spot Checks and Compliance Issues Questions in this section focus on how the district reviews BMPs for compliance and how maintenance and/or non-compliance issues are addressed.										
Are all BMPs under the waste management category spot checked for the first five years after installation? This applies to all farms that fall under the thresholds that are regulated by DWR.				X	Yes, there is one farm that falls in this category.		X			
How does the district notify the NRCS area office or division to conduct spot checks for contracts that need to be spot checked by someone outside of the district? (Refer to Spot Check Policy)				X	The district notifies the area office staff when NRCS calls about any contracts that need to be spotchecked like supervisors, employees, etc.		X			


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How does your district notify individuals that have BMPs that are out of compliance or need maintenance? (Refer to Non-Compliance Policy)				X	The district notifies the individual with a phone call, email or a letter that the BMPs are out of compliance or need maintenance.		X			
How are supervisors notified of BMPs that are out of compliance or need maintenance at any time throughout the year?				X	The district staff notifies the board at the next meeting that the BMP is out of compliance or needs maintenance. Word of mouth is used a lot from other county staff.		X			
Does the district provide a written notice that the BMP must be repaired or re-implemented within 30 working days? (Vegetative practices have to be reestablished within one calendar year.) Is a copy of the notification kept in the contract file?				X	Yes, a certified letter is sent to the cooperator. A copy is kept in the file folder.		X			
If the BMP was not repaired or re-implemented, was repayment requested? Please provide documentation: contract numbers and/or names.				X	Yes, Jerome Lanier. The contracts were 71-2008-004 and 71-2008-009.		X			
Is the district notifying the division of non-compliance and resolutions?				X	Yes, the district is notifying the division.		X			
Section 3: Record Keeping Questions in this section focus on how funds are managed and accounted for, maintaining proper design and job approval authority, as well as disclosure forms.										
Do you use the CS2 reports to show the board available program funds, encumbrances and expenditures?				X	Yes, the district uses CS2 reports on the contract funds and shows the board the contract transaction report.		X			
How are technical assistance and operating funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?		X			The district is not under the county finance dept. The funds are tracked by the district admin. Staff using Quickbooks. The have been audited	X				


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					and a monthly report is shown to the board with line item expenditures and balances. The last audit was done by Miller and Company. The last one was done in about 10 years. The district can also do an internal audit. A recommendation is given to do an internal audit with help from Kristina the area coordinator. See reference to GS 139-7 regarding internal audits.			The board also agreed to do an audit on the books and will be scheduled after April 15 th .	After April 15 th	Plan of action accepted on 3/25/21.
Who in the office does work for Cost Share Programs?				X	Jason Turner does the technical work with the district and Priscilla Pierce does the educational and administration work for the cost share programs. The district also had an ATAC person to help with the disaster work.		X			
Is proper job approval authority (JAA) documented for each technical and cost share position? Please provide a copy of the latest approved JAA. (Print a copy of what is in the data base. Does it match the district's version?)				X	Yes, Gavin has sent me the most recent copy of Jason's JAA. It will be compared to what is in the JAA database. Jason is working with the area office to get JAA for Rooftop Runoff Mgmt. BMP.		X			


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Section 4: Contract Reviews and Site Visits Below is a list of the contracts the division reviewed. Spot checks were also conducted. Notes include recommendations and/or corrective action for contract files as well as the BMP. Contracts/BMPs are listed by contract number.										
Contract Number: 71-2019-628 Applicant Name: Don Rawls (supervisor) BMP: Non-Field Farm Road Repair (disaster) 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			


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Contract Number: 71-2015-003 Applicant Name: William Murrell (supervisor) BMP: Cropland Conversion to Grass 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			

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Contract Number: 71-2014-005 Applicant Name: William Murrell (supervisor) BMP: Cropland Conversion to Grass 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			

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Contract Number: 71-2017-007 Applicant Name: Jared Johnson BMP: Long Term No-Till 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			

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Contract Number: 71-2018-804 Applicant Name: David Rowe BMP: Water Supply Well (AgWRAP) 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			

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Contract Number: 71-2014-003 Applicant Name: G. Lanier BMP: Water Control Structures 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			

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Contract Number: 71-2016-002 Applicant Name: Big Branch Farms, LLC BMP: Cropland Conversion to Grass 				X	The BMP looked good and was functioning properly. All documentation in the file looked good.		X			
General Comments	X				Commendation on documentation in the contract file folders. The file folders looked really good and		X			

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					organized with all proper documentation. Good job!					